The Program Evaluation Process

Addendum to:

Evaluating Environmental Education and Outreach Programs

Step 1. Outline Your Goals

Before beginning, write down your answers to these questions (also, See Section 1. page 5)

1. Why are you doing an evaluation – what is the purpose of the research you're planning?
2. What is the main purpose of the program?
3. What changes do you expect the program to produce in its target audience?
4. What specific information do you want to know when the evaluation is completed?

Step 2. Assess Your Current Information

What sources of information about your target audience do you have? For example, a list of prior participants, classroom lists, contact with participants on site? If your program is a community wide information campaign, the telephone directory is your source! See Section 3 page 25: Coverage.

If your information about program participants is spotty, being sure to collect systematic information on an ongoing basis is a great first step in preparing for program evaluation.

Step 3. Choose Your Method

What method will you use to get information from the target audience? Refer to the table below as well as Section 2: Getting Information.

Type of Program	Recommended method	Cost and Effort	Issues to consider
Workshop or Class activity	Focus Group (adults).meetings (p. 17)	Low	Incentives, not representative
	On-site Evaluation Form/Survey (p. 18)	Moderate	Timing (too soon?), Sampling
	Follow up telephone survey (pp. 18 & 21)*	Moderate	Timing (too late?), Sampling
Event (i.e. fairs, tours, recycling drives)	Intercept Survey (p. 21)	Moderate	Sampling
Information campaign	Focus Group	Low	Incentives, not representative
	Intercept Survey**	Moderate	Sampling
	Community Telephone Survey (p. 21)	High	Complex, best to subcontract

Information Hotline	Follow up telephone survey (pp. 18 & 21)	Moderate	Timing, Sampling

*Use participant evaluation forms and surveys but administer the survey over the phone instead of on-site.
**Use an event like a county fair to assess your information campaign

Step 4. Determine Your Sample Size

Focus Group: – 6-8 participants requires 12-14 recruits (many people will not show up for the discussion)
See Section 3 page 27: Margins of Error: How many cases is enough?

For Telephone Surveys: Remember that a portion of the people on your list will either not be interested in participating or will have moved or changed their phone numbers. Randomly select twice as many names and numbers as you need. Try for a 50% minimum response rate. See Section 3 page 28: Non-Response.

Step 5. Develop your timeline and consider your budget

How much time do you need in order to complete your evaluation? How does it relate to the timing of your program? Remember to allow time to design questions/forms, to pretest the surveys/forms, to implement the program and the assessment (consider if the program needs to be modified at all to incorporate the assessment), to code completed forms, enter them into your database and do some analysis.

Step 6. Design your questions and pretest them

See Section 4 page 32 of the Workbook.

Step 7. Implement your program and its assessment

Step 8. Code and create your database

See Section 5 p.37 Working with Information
If you use a focus group or community meeting, at this point you would summarize the discussion.

Step 9. Analysis

See Section 5 p. 42.

Step 10. Write it up!

Always document your findings.

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